



Department of Justice

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES FINAL SENTENCING IN TERRE HAUTE'S "OPERATION OCTANE"

U.S. Attorney says Terre Haute is safer after arrest, conviction of methamphetamine ring

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS – Joseph H. Hogsett, the United States Attorney, announced today the sentencing of Chad Noble, age 35, of Terre Haute, after his conviction in a scheme to obtain and distribute large quantities of "crystal" methamphetamine in the Terre Haute area. In federal court this morning, Noble was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Jane Magnus-Stinson to life in federal prison, without the option of parole.

"Two years ago, we announced a major crackdown on those who peddle in guns and drugs on our streets, and nowhere has our Violent Crime Initiative been more visible than in Terre Haute," Hogsett said. "With today's sentencing, we can close the book on Operation Octane, and with it a significant drug trafficking operation here in the Wabash Valley."

In 2010, information was obtained that a group of individuals were distributing large amounts of "crystal" methamphetamine in Terre Haute. A federal-local task force was formed, and launched "Operation Octane" to target and dismantle the drug trafficking organization. The lengthy investigation included the confiscation of over \$100,000 worth of methamphetamine, approximately \$27,000 in cash, and 33 firearms that included both hand guns and assault rifles. Police officers also seized two pipe bomb explosive devices.

In April 2011, a grand jury indicted 13 individuals for their roles in the scheme. The defendants were convicted of using multiple sources of supply to bring pound quantities of "crystal" methamphetamine into the area. After the methamphetamine arrived in Terre Haute, the conspirators then distributed the drug throughout the Wabash Valley. Several of the conspirators were also convicted of possessing firearms in connection with their drug trafficking activities.

Hogsett noted that “Operation Octane” was one of the first large-scale prosecutions as part of the U.S. Attorney’s Violent Crime Initiative. Launched in March 2011, the VCI has produced a dramatic increase in the number of gun-related charges brought federally. In the year preceding the initiative, there were just 14 defendants charged with federal gun crimes by the U.S. Attorney’s Office. In the nearly two years since, more than 200 defendants have been charged.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthias D. Onderak, who prosecuted the case for the government, approximately 150 law enforcement officers participated in the execution of arrest and search warrants related to this investigation, which took place in Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Crown Point, and Mishawaka.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Safe Streets Task Force led the seven month investigation. Assisting the FBI were the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Vigo County Sheriff’s Department, the Terre Haute Police Department, the Indiana State Police, Clay County Sheriff’s Department, and the Seelyville Police Department.

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